

Claims

- [c1] A vehicular rearview mirror system for indicating to a vehicle operator the detection of an object in the vehicle's blind zone, comprising:
- a first reflective element for providing the operator with a rearward view;
 - a second reflective element associated with the first reflective element that is adapted to provide an image to the operator of the object in the vehicle's blind zone adjacent to the rearward view which is not generally observable by the operator in the rearward view; and
 - a recognition enhancement device associated with at least the second reflective element for enhancing the operator's recognition of the object in the vehicle's blind zone, wherein the recognition enhancement device is actuated upon detection of the object in the vehicle's blind zone to effectively draw the operator's visual attention to the second reflective element.
- [c2] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 1 wherein the recognition enhancement device comprises a transmission device for transmitting into the blind zone a signal adapted for reflection from the object.

- [c3] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 2 wherein the signal comprises one of an infrared, optical, radar, sonar or ultrasonic signal.
- [c4] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 2 wherein the recognition enhancement device comprises a sensing element for sensing the signal reflected from an object in the blind zone.
- [c5] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 1 wherein the recognition enhancement device comprises a signaling device.
- [c6] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 5 wherein the signaling device comprises at least one point-type light.
- [c7] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 6 wherein the at least one point-type light comprises at least one incandescent light.
- [c8] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 6 wherein the at least one point-type light comprises at least one light-emitting diode.
- [c9] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 5 wherein the signaling device comprises at least one illuminated signal marker.

- [c10] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 9 wherein the at least one illuminated signal marker comprises at least one incandescent light.
- [c11] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 9 wherein the at least one illuminated signal marker comprises at least one light-emitting diode.
- [c12] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 5 wherein the signaling device comprises at least one remote display.
- [c13] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 12 wherein the at least one remote display comprises a camera adapted to capture an image of the object in the vehicle's blind zone and one of a cathode ray-type television monitor, a liquid crystal display, or a plasma display for displaying the image of the object.
- [c14] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 5 wherein the signaling device comprises at least one peripheral signal light extending along the periphery of the second reflective element.
- [c15] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 14 wherein the at least one peripheral signal light comprises at least one incandescent light.

- [c16] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 14 wherein the at least one peripheral signal light comprises at least one light-emitting diode.
- [c17] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 5 wherein the signaling device comprises a numerical display for indicating the distance separating the vehicle from the object.
- [c18] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 17 wherein the numerical display comprises at least one incandescent light.
- [c19] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 17 wherein the numerical display comprises at least one light-emitting diode.
- [c20] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 5 wherein the signaling device comprises at least one peripheral signal light extending along the periphery of the first reflective element.
- [c21] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 20 wherein the at least one peripheral signal light comprises at least one incandescent light.
- [c22] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 20 wherein the at least one peripheral signal light comprises at least

one light-emitting diode.

- [c23] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 1 wherein the recognition enhancement device comprises an electrochromic layer adapted to reduce the intensity of light transmitted from the object and reflected from the second reflective element.
- [c24] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 23 wherein the electrochromic layer is adapted to darken upon detecting light from the object.
- [c25] The vehicular rearview mirror system of claim 23 wherein the electrochromic layer is adapted to reduce the intensity of light reflected from both the first reflective element and the second reflective element.